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NEWS AND NOTES

The Charleston Museum has secured the assistance of Mr. E. R. Memminger in a revision of the Henry W. Ravenel herbarium and the preparation of a catalogue of the fungi of South Carolina.

Mr. W. H. Rankin, Fellow in Plant Pathology at Cornell University, made his headquarters at the Garden during most of May, while beginning an investigation of the chestnut canker with special reference to its control in New York state.

Under the title "Fungi Lyndonvillenses novi vel minus cogniti," Dr. Chas. E. Fairman (Ann. Myc. 9: 147–152) describes the following new species of fungi: *Phoma cercidicola, Phoma Halesiae, Phoma regina, Cladosporium Vincae, Volutella Vincae, Mollisia lanaria, Septoria lanaria,* and *Phialea phaeconia.* Also *Ophiobolus vulgaris, Gnaphalii* Sacc. & Br. is raised to specific rank and the new variety, *Ophiobolus Gnaphalii lanaria* is described.

We learn from *Science* that, on April 11, Governor Tener sent a special message to the Pennsylvania legislature, recommending immediate legislation for control of the chestnut canker. A bill has since been passed providing for a commission to undertake this work, and carrying a total appropriation of $275,000. So far it is only the eastern and southeastern counties of Pennsylvania that are completely infected with this disease, and it is hoped, by the elimination of spot infections in advance of the line of general occurrence of the disease, to restrict its spread to this area. The great chestnut forests of the state which, according to the state department of forestry, have a total valuation of approximately $50,000,000, are still essentially untouched by the disease, and the great object of the proposed legislation is to save these. Experiments made by the national department of agriculture appear to have demonstrated practical methods of quarantine against this disease; and Pennsylvania is the first state to undertake these methods on a large scale.

"The Lichens of Minnesota," by Professor B. Fink of Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, is based on extensive field work under the auspices of the Geological and Natural History Survey of Minnesota extending over a period from 1896 to 1902. In the preparation of the text since the latter date, the libraries of the United States Department of Agriculture at Washington, the Lloyd Botanical Library at Cincinnati, and the library of the Missouri Botanical Garden have been consulted.

In this work the treatment of generic names is in accordance with present usage and synonyms are omitted except the citation of the first binomial used where a species has been transferred from the genus in which it was originally described.

The preliminary chapter consists of a concise treatment of the origin and nature of lichens, their morphology, reproduction, and economic bearing. While it is noted that some botanists hold that the lichens should be distributed among the fungi, no attempt has been made to do so in this paper.

The body of the work contains keys to the genera and descriptions of the families, genera and species. More than three hundred species are described and many of them beautifully illustrated with half-tone cuts. While the title of the work would indicate that it is restricted in its scope, the lichens of Minnesota are typical of many other localities and the work will be found to be of great value to students interested in this group of plants. The entire work comprises 269 + xvii pages of text and 51 plates, besides a number of text figures.—*F. J. Seaver.*

The Genus Fimetaria.—With reference to the substitution of *Fimetaria* for the generic name of those fungi commonly included in the genus *Sordaria,* the following criticism appears in Ann. Myc. **9**: 192: "Aus welchem Grunde der allbekannte Gattungsname *Sordaria* durch den neuen Namen *Fimetaria* ersetzt wirt ist nicht ersichtlich. Jedenfalls ist diese Umnennung nicht zu billigen, wie auch in der im Jahre 1901 erschienenen monographischen

Bearbeitung der nordamerikanischen Sordariaceen seitens Griffiths der Gattungsname *Sordaria* beibehalten worden ist."

The new generic name was published in *North American Flora* 3: 65. Since no opportunity is given in that work for extended notes and in view of the above criticism, it is thought well to give our reasons for this substitution of names.

In the American Code of Botanical Nomenclature, sec. IV, canon 15 (c), we find the following rule relative to the fixing of the type of a genus. "The application to a genus of a former specific name of one of the included species designates the type." As an illustration of the application of the above rule we read the following: "*Sordaria* Ces. & DeN. Comm. Soc. Critt. Ital. **1**: 225 (1863), is typified by *Sphaeria Sordaria* Fr., one of its twelve species." *Sphaeria Sordaria* is, according to recent authorities, a *Rosellinia*, in the sense that *Rosellinia* is now used. The name *Sordaria* would then become a synonym of *Rosellinia* as now used, and the group of species to which the name *Sordaria* is commonly applied would be left without a name and since there is no other name in literature which could be taken up for the genus, the only alternative is the substitution of a new name. In brief, then, this substitution of *Fimetaria* as the generic name of those species commonly known by the old name *Sordaria* was made in order to make the work of *North American Flora* conform to the requirements of the rules of the American Code of Botanical Nomenclature.—*F. J. Seaver.*

McAlpine's "Smuts of Australia."—From McAlpine's previous work, especially his "Rusts of Australia," one would naturally expect a good piece of investigation in his "Smuts of Australia," and an examination of this, his latest work, entirely confirms this expectation. Probably no other book brings together so much general information regarding this important group of fungi. The author treats the subject from a threefold point of view. First, he gives in detail information regarding the general nature of smuts, character of the mycelium, spores, germination, infection of hosts, immunity, etc. Second, he takes up certain economic smuts, as the grain and grass species, and treats them very fully as to their life history, prevention, etc. Finally, he considers them from the systematic point of view, and classifies and describes the sixty-eight species, under ten genera, that have been reported for Australia. An extended bibliography of smuts in general, together with host, species and general indices, completes the work.

Regarding the origin of the smuts, after discussing the opinions of others, he says: " My own idea is that the Ustilagineae may be simply regarded as forms which have a distinct alternation of a saprophytic with a parasitic stage, and with sexuality grafted onto this, they originated the Uredineae. It is considered that the promycelium bearing the conidia is a saprophyte, because it generally grows freely in a nutritive solution."

Regarding his characterization of genera, as exemplified largely by the species included, there is room for a decided difference of opinion. Personally, the writer would not make *Cintractia* embrace such a variety of species as he has done, since if we include all species that have a more or less radial development of spores, we would hardly know where to stop. We also believe that the false membrane of sterile fungous cells enclosing the spore mass, as indicated by the genus *Sphacelotheca,* is of generic importance, a genus, however, that he fails to recognize in his classification. *Sorosporium Reilianum* under its new generic position is apparently no more happily placed than it was in its previous experience under *Ustilago, Cintractia,* or *Sphacelotheca,* since the spore-balls at best are very vague affairs. However, it is an easy matter to criticise the opinions of others when they differ from our own. If we were all to agree on generic and specific characters, the "natural" system of classification would have been here long ago, which is merely another way of stating that it never will come.

In the matter of illustration, this monograph is well supplied with excellent photomicrographs of the spores.—*G. P. Clinton.*